# Hoopa Tribal Radio KIDE - 91.3FM

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**2015 08.18 Health Matters**

**Tomatoes**

**This is Health Matters, reporting on tomatoes.**

**If you can stroll out to your garden and pick ripe tomatoes for lunch or dinner, lucky you. Fresh, juicy tomatoes will add flavor and variety to whatever else you may be planning to eat. But even if you don't have a garden, you can get vine-ripened tomatoes from local growers. For nutrition, flavor and therapeutic benefits, garden tomatoes are where it's at.**

**Most tomatoes found in supermarkets are picked green and then treated with ethylene gas. Which turns them red without really ripening them. And is the reason why they are tasteless and rubbery. Worse, gas treated tomatoes are far inferior nutritionally. If all you can get are non-local supermarket tomatoes, place them upside down on a sunny windowsill for a few days. This will at least bring them to a natural ripeness**

**Some supermarket tomatoes are grown hydroponically. While perfect in appearance, water-grown tomatoes not only lack flavor. They lack nutrients. Tomatoes have so many benefits, you'll want to buy them vine-ripened whenever you can. As for tomatoes grown with pesticides, they carry the usual risks. But if you can't afford organic, you should still eat tomatoes. Healthwise, they are far too valuable not to.**

**Tomatoes help the body convert glucose into energy. And there is evidence that tomatoes help with glucose regulation as well. Tomatoes also improve blood vessel function. For people with diabetes, tomatoes protect against retinopathy. Tomatoes even help preserve brain and nerve tissue and prevent appendicitis.**

**Tomatoes also assist nerve impulses and the absorption of fat. They help with sleep and muscle movement. Tomatoes help maintain cell membranes. They are useful in reducing chronic inflammation.**

**You wonder how science determines all this. But with all these documented benefits to maintaining our multiple, interwoven body functions, you can see why tomatoes have rate high in preventing heart disease, diabetes, cancer and obesity. Of course this is true of many plant foods. The more fruits and vegetables you eat every day, the healthier you will be -- from skin and hair, to energy levels, weight and resistance to disease.**

**Science has discovered that the high nutrition charge of tomatoes is due, at least in part, to the fact that they contain a full-spectrum of a key anti-oxidant. This full spectrum enables interactions that greatly increase the high level of functioning tomatoes deliver.**

**Tomatoes work in sync with other vegetables too. Which maximizes the nutritional and healing properties of each. For example, when tomatoes and broccoli are eaten together their cancer prevention impact is doubled. This was found in a study of prostate cancer in rats. Prostate tumors grew much more slowly in the rats fed both tomato and broccoli powder than in those just given one or the other.**

**When tomatoes are eaten with healthy fats -- like avocados or olive oil -- the body's absorption of cancer-preventing nutrients can increase up to 15 times more than otherwise. So try drizzling a little olive oil on a sliced tomato. Or add some slices of tomato and avocado to a sandwich. Foods that work in sync with other foods is a subject we'll continue to report on.**

**Tomato products are great for pregnant women because they're high in the folic acid essential to normal neurological development in the fetus. Tomato products are also great for mothers who are nursing their infants. Because the anti-oxidants in tomatoes their way into the breast milk, strengthening infant metabolism. For this purpose, researchers have found that tomato sauce has more benefit than fresh tomatoes.**

**Which brings up another valuable finding. Tomato sauce made with the peels is absorbed much more efficiently by human intestinal cells than sauce made without the tomato peels. So don't peel your tomatoes! Same goes for potatoes, by the way. Veggie skins are dense with nutrients. The bottom line is whole foods keep you whole.**

**A few notes about dietary restrictions. Tomatoes are low calorie and low sodium. They are high potassium and high fiber. Our need for potassium extends from kidney health to heart function. And potassium is known for reducing stroke risk. But beta-blocker medications can cause blood potassium levels to increase beyond healthy levels.** **Tomatoes should be consumed in moderation when taking beta-blockers.**

**Health Matters is a production of KIDE Hoopa CA.  Produced and written by Cynthia Poten.  Engineered by Joseph Orozco.  Our readers were Joy Hostler, Jay Renzuli and Joseph Orozco.  For this audio and more information, visit our download area at  www.kidefm.org. Thank you for listening.**

**Sources and Links**

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